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Illinois Wesleyan University

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## President Wilson Opens Academic Year with President's Convocation

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Presiding at his first President's Convocation on September 8, 2004, Illinois Wesleyan President Richard F. Wilson said that he hopes all members of the University community resist the temptation to take their experience at Illinois Wesleyan for granted.

Wilson welcomed a capacity crowd of about 550 members of the community to Westbrook Auditorium where he introduced author and historian David Halberstam as the featured speaker for the event.

In his introductory remarks, Wilson noted that the opening of an academic year at Illinois Wesleyan may have become old hat for some. But for him, this will be a year of firsts.

"The 'newness may wear off," he said. "But I hope never to take this special place for granted. And I hope you won't.

"We are privileged to be here, all of us, and I believe it is important to keep that in mind," he added. "We have a wonderful opportunity to join together as a community of scholars and artists on this beautiful campus. We have an opportunity to ask important questions, to wrestle with big ideas, to work alongside talented colleagues, and to have the satisfaction that comes from helping to shape young minds —to lead them to ask important questions to wrestle with big ideas.

Wilson noted that he has been telling students in formal and informal occasions that they should cherish their four years at the University. "But I believe we should all cherish the opportunity we have here," he said "We should all cherish this community of ours."

"This morning we take a moment to celebrate this moment of our University's annual rebirth," Wilson said. "As we do, let us recognize the generations of men and women who have preceded us here. This University is entering its 155th year. This tradition of convening — or reconvening — for a formal welcome stretches back more than 80 years. It is more than a mere formality. It is an opportunity to come together in anticipation of what lies ahead. May the 'newness' never wear off. Welcome to you all."